

NPS Reference Manual 41 - Wilderness Stewardship

Background and Purpose

The Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964, established the National Wilderness Preservation System and identified the National Park Service (NPS) as one of the four federal agencies responsible for the protection and preservation of the nation's wilderness resource. The language within the Wilderness Act clearly shows Congress intended wilderness areas within units of the National Park System receive special attention in addition to that resulting from other laws and policies affecting national park resources. Wilderness areas are to be given supplemental and permanent protection beyond that normally afforded other backcountry resources. This requires park managers and staff to know and understand the laws, policies, and procedures that apply to wilderness in addition to those that apply to national park areas in general.

The primary purpose of this Reference Manual is to provide superintendents and park staff with the essential information on the laws, policies, and procedures applicable to wilderness stewardship in the National Park System. It also serves as an introduction to the NPS wilderness website, *The Wilderness Visitor*, and Wilderness Program information on the INSIDE NPS website—continually expanding information sources to assist managers and staff in meeting their responsibilities to steward the NPS wilderness resource.

Current Policy

To obtain the most current edition of **NPS Reference Manual 41 - Wilderness Stewardship**, visit the National Park Service Office of Policy website. The Wilderness Stewardship Reference Manual is located on the Internet at www.nps.gov/policy/DOrders/RM41.doc.

For more information

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